

# HOW TO BREW YOUR OWN BEER

*This is the final reading passage of A Matter of Life 3.0, so it's time to celebrate! No usual language activities here, just enjoy yourself with a cold one of your own making!*

## Equipment

- Large brew pot – 4 or 5 gallon stainless steel pot where you will bring your initial mixture of malt extract, water and hops to a boil.
- Fermenter – a vessel that can be used to contain the beer as it is being fermented.
- Funnel and Strainer – to help transfer the contents of your brew pot into the fermenter.
- Siphon Hose – to transfer your beer from the fermenter into the empty beer bottles.
- Airlock and Stopper – sized to fit your fermenter, to prevent outside air from getting inside the fermenter, while at the same time allowing the carbon dioxide that is produced by fermentation to escape.
- Thermometer – to measure the temperature of your brew during different stages of the brewing process.
- Bottling Bucket – to hold the mixture of the finished beer before bottling.
- Beer Bottles and Capper – for the packaging and storage of your finished beer.
- Bottle Caps
- Sanitizing solution – since beer is prone to infection, everything must be sanitized before use.

## Ingredients

- Malt Extract – produced by the forced germination of barley grain, which activates the enzymes that can then be used in the brewing process. Packages of pre-made malt extract can be purchased at your local home-brewing store or online retailer and come in many different flavours and varieties.
- Hops – the flowering cones found on the end of the vine of the hop flower. Hops are used to give beer its bitterness, aroma, and additional flavours.
- Yeast – a type of fungus that is used in the fermenting process to convert the sugar in the malt extract into ethyl alcohol and carbon dioxide.
- Water – normal tap water can be used for home-brewing; it is important that it be free of any major impurities or chemicals. The chlorine that is found in most water supply systems can give your beer a harsh flavour, so it is often better to use bottled or filtered water.
- Sugar (Dextrose or Glucose) – added to the beer before bottling in order to carbonate the beer.

## The brewing process

- **Brewing the Beer** – Pale malt extract and hops are boiled together with water for about an hour to sterilize the extract and release the bittering qualities of the hops. Frequently grains are steeped in the mixture prior to the boil to add additional colour and flavour complexity.
- **Cooling and Fermenting** – The hot mixture (called wort) is cooled to room temperature and siphoned or transferred to a fermenter where it is combined with additional water to achieve the desired batch size. Once the mixture drops to room temperature, yeast is added to start the fermentation process. Cleanliness and sanitation are very important since the wort can be easily infected by bacteria in this state. An airlock is used to keep the fermenter sealed during fermentation. Your beer will ferment for 1-2 weeks.
- **Priming and Bottling** – Once the beer is fully fermented, it is siphoned to another container to prepare for bottling. Here priming sugars such as corn sugar are mixed with the beer. The beer is siphoned into bottles and each bottle is capped.
- **Aging** – Once the beer has been bottled it needs to age for 2-6 weeks. During aging the yeast will ferment the remaining sugar you added and create carbon dioxide to make your beer nice and bubbly. In addition, undesirable sediments such as excess yeast and proteins will drop out of the beer during aging and this will enhance the flavour of your beer. It may take several months to reach peak flavour, though homemade beer is usually drinkable after a month.
- **Drinking** – When the beer is properly aged – just put the bottles in the fridge and enjoy! There's nothing quite like a great beer that you made yourself.